AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A method of allocating switch requests within a packet switch, the method comprising: ~~comprising the steps of~~

(a) generating switch request data for each input port indicative of the output ports to which data packets are to be transmitted;

(b) processing the switch request data for each input port to generate request data for each input port-output port pairing; and

(c) ~~(d)~~ generating an allocation plan by sorting the request data *R* relating to each of the input/output pairs in terms of their queue length, and

(d) ~~(e)~~ for each input/output pair, considered in the sorted order, allocating as many of the requests in the queue as can be accommodated in the remaining time slots.

2. (Original) A method of packet switching wherein the packets are switched on the basis of the allocated routing, and to a packet switch in which the input port-output port routing is allocated in accordance with claim 1, and packets are switched from an input port to a specified output port in accordance with the allocated routing.

3. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, in which unallocated switch requests are reserved for use in the next phase of switch request allocation, or abandoned if they have exceeded a predetermined expiry time.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising a preliminary stage in which the number of requests for each input or output port is reduced by a factor such that the number of requests relating to that port is no greater than the number of available time slots.

5. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising a preliminary stage in which the number of requests in respect of each input/output pair are reduced by a single common factor such that the number of requests relating to all ports is no greater than the number of available time slots.

6. (Previously Presented) A method of packet switching wherein the input port-output port routing is allocated according to the method of claim 1 and the packets are switched on the basis of the allocated routing.

7. (Previously Presented) A packet switch in which the input port-output port routing is allocated in accordance with the method of claim 1.

8. (Original) A packet switch according to claim 7, wherein packets are switched from an input port to a specified output port in accordance with the allocated routing.